

X.—*The Geographical Races of Herpestes brachyurus*,  
*Gray.* By OLDFIELD THOMAS.

(Published by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.)

*HERPESTES BRACHYURUS* was originally described on a specimen coming from Malacca, and examples from Sumatra and Borneo have since been referred to the same species. A study of the material now available shows that while they seem to be all rightly referred to *H. brachyurus*—being alike in all their more essential characters,—yet that they may be separated into four geographical races, one each from the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra and two from Borneo.

Nearly allied to *H. brachyurus* is the *H. semitorquatus* of Borneo, with a longer tail, redder coloration, a light but variable mark on the side of the neck, and lighter dentition, the anterior upper molar especially being without the marked thickening of the anterior side of the inner lobe nearly always found in *H. brachyurus*.

The subspecies which I should recognise may be distinguished as follows:—

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| A. Hairs of anterior part of chest and lower neck of irregular direction, grizzled greyish and buffy.  |                          |
| <i>a.</i> Upper surface coarsely and prominently ticked with buffy whitish. Belly brown with some light tickings. (Malacca.) . . . . .   | <i>H. b. brachyurus.</i> |
| <i>b.</i> Upper surface blackish, with scarcely any tickings. Belly black. (Sumatra.) . . . . .  | <i>H. b. sumatrius.</i>  |
| B. Hairs of anterior chest and lower neck definitely directed forwards, blackish, in continuity with the prominently black belly.  |                          |
| <i>c.</i> Colour dull blackish olivaceous, without rufous suffusion. Skull of normal shape. (Northern Borneo; Sarawak (lowlands).) . . . . .                                     | <i>H. b. rajah.</i>      |
| <i>d.</i> Colour more or less suffused with rufous, especially on head and throat. Skull shortened, with unusual zygomatic spread. (Mountainous region of E. Sarawak.) . . . . . | <i>H. b. dyacorum.</i>   |

Details of new forms:—

*Herpestes brachyurus sumatrius.*

Apparently less robust than true *brachyurus*, but the only specimen available is a female. General colour above blackish brown, with comparatively few of the light buffy-whitish tickings found in *brachyurus*. Belly blackish, but anteriorly this colour changes abruptly to grizzled buffy greyish on the neck, throat, and chin; the hairs of the lower

neck irregular in direction, as in *brachyurus*. Legs, feet, and tail blackish brown.

Skull of normal shape, with comparatively long muzzle. In the type the breadth across the outer corners of  $pm^4$  does not exceed the length of the premolar-molar series. Teeth comparatively light and delicate, the usual thickening of the inner lobe of  $m^1$  at a minimum.

Dimensions of the type:—

Hind foot (s. n.) (wet) 79 mm. Skull, gnathion to back of bulla 82; zygomatic breadth 48·5; front of canine to back of  $m^2$  33; breadth between outer corners of carnassial 27·5; length of carnassial on outer edge 7·8.

*Hab.* Sumatra. Type from Deli.

*Type.* Adult female. B.M. no. 90. 1. 20. 2. Collected 3rd November, 1888, by Mr. Iverson. Received in exchange from the Christiania Museum.

#### *Herpestes brachyurus rajah.*

General colour dark blackish olivaceous, profusely ticked with the minute subterminal buffy rings on the hairs. Belly black, without lighter tickings, this colour running forward anteriorly along the lower side of the neck nearly to the level of the ears, the hairs in this anterior region being all definitely directed forwards. Head dull brown, interramia lighter, but neither with any suffusion of rufous or ochraceous. Tail coarsely grizzled black and pale buffy.

Skull of normal shape; teeth of medium stoutness, decidedly heavier than in *sumatrius*.

Dimensions of type:—

Hind foot (dry) 80 mm. Skull: condylo-basal length 84·5; zygomatic breadth 46·5; maxillary tooth-row 33; breadth between outer corners of carnassials 28·5; length of carnassial on outer edge 8·4.

*Hab.* Sarawak. Type from Balinean, in lowlands.

*Type.* Adult female. B.M. no. 5. 3. 1. 8. Original number 16. Collected March 1903, and presented by Herbert C. Robinson, Esq. Other specimens received in 1876 from Mr. H. Low, and in 1878 from Governor H. T. Ussher.

#### *Herpestes brachyurus dyacorum.*

General coloration as in *rajah*, but the whole more or less suffused with rufous or ochraceous, the pale rings on the dorsal hairs of the latter colour. Belly black, though with a certain number of light ticked hairs, the dark colour running forward on to the lower neck as in *rajah*, and the hairs being

similarly directed forwards. Head dark rufous-brown, interramia and throat dull drabby or rufous; a tendency for an ill-defined lateral line on the neck to be of this latter colour. Tail broadly grizzled with black and dull buffy.

Skull strongly built, usually with peculiarly shortened muzzle and widely expanded zygomata. Teeth stout and heavy, often very much so, the thickening of the inner lobe of  $m^1$  at a maximum.

Dimensions of the type:—

Hind foot (dry) 81 mm. Skull: condylo-basal length 88; zygomatic breadth 55; maxillary tooth-row 33; breadth between outer corners of carnassials 30; length of carnassial on outer edge 8.3.

*Hab.* Mountainous region of Eastern Sarawak, notably the Baram district. Type from Mt. Dulit.

*Type.* Old male. B.M. no. 99. 12. 9. 26. Collected 17th December, 1896, and presented by Dr. Charles Hose. Four specimens examined.

The Bornean material in the Museum seems to indicate clearly that two races of *H. brachyurus* occur there, the one olivaceous blackish without warmer suffusion, and the other more or less rufous or ochraceous. And, so far as exactly labelled specimens are concerned, the former is a lowland and the latter a mountain race. But far more specimens with exact localities are needed before the respective ranges of the two forms can be made out.

## XI.—*A new Genus of Opossum from Southern Patagonia.* By OLDFIELD THOMAS.

(Published by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.)

AMONG some small mammals collected by Mr. T. H. Hall at Cape Tres Puntas, on the east coast of Southern Patagonia, in south latitude  $47^\circ$ , there occurs, most unexpectedly, a small opossum, this locality being far to the south of any hitherto recorded for the family, the previously known southern limit having been the Island of Chiloe,  $42^\circ$ – $43^\circ$  S. The collection was sent by Mr. Hall to the Perth Museum, Western Australia, whence it has been transferred by exchange to the British Museum.

The opossum is a small animal, externally very like the Chilean opossum, *Marmosa elegans*, but close examination reveals so many differences from that as from other members